



Got an hour?

You've finished shopping and have a little time to kill before dinner. Or you have kids with short attention spans. Or you want to squeeze in one more sight before your weekend in Chicago is over. These nine spots promise memorable visits in just 60 quick minutes.

	DESTINATION	WHAT YOU'LL SEE	TIP
	<p>Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool (Above) Lincoln Park Zoo is next door, but you won't hear a single screech here. Passing through the gates is like stepping into a Monet painting; you'll wonder how a city of 3 million has a garden this quiet. Free (chicagoparkdistrict.com).</p>	<p>Water rushes over limestone rocks, benches invite contemplation and flowers float on quiet, rock-edged pools.</p>	<p>The park has no parking, so take the CTA's 151 bus north from the Mag Mile, get off at Fullerton and walk 1 block east.</p>
	<p>Chicago Riverwalk Take the steps down from North Michigan Avenue to the new Chicago Riverwalk, which runs along the south bank from Lake Michigan to Lake Street. The McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum offers a glimpse of the city's river history (877/244-2246; explorechicago.org).</p>	<p>Centennial Fountain shoots its arc of water across the river on the hour. Six cafes line the walk, offering eye-level peeks at busy river traffic.</p>	<p>Most people don't know Chicago has a Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the riverwalk, with a black granite slab bearing the names of those killed.</p>
	<p>Museum of Contemporary Art For some cool insights, hop on one of the free 45-minute tours at this hot spot one block east of the Mag Mile. The docent-led tours can focus on the current exhibition as well as pieces from the standing collection. Admission charged (312/280-2660; mcachicago.org).</p>	<p><i>Rewind: 1970s to 1990s: Works from the MCA Collection</i> runs through September 5 and is a great introduction to contemporary art.</p>	<p>The museum is closed on Mondays and has free admission on Tuesdays, plus free jazz concerts on Tuesday evenings through September 28.</p>
	<p>Chicago Architecture Foundation The city's stunning architecture is a testament to the brilliant—and bedeviled—men who invented the skyscraper. Learn about their stories during hourlong \$5 lunchtime walking tours led by Chicago Architecture Foundation docents (312/922-3432; architecture.org).</p>	<p>On the Marquette Building tour, you'll see bronze friezes and Tiffany glass mosaics and learn how this 1895 landmark captures Chicago style.</p>	<p>These Big Building Mini-Tours start at 12:15 p.m. on weekdays, and visitors have 18 tours to choose from (topics vary depending on the day).</p>

PHOTOGRAPHS: (FROM TOP) COURTESY OF CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT (2); JASON LINDSEY; NATHAN KEAY



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	<p>Art Institute (Above) Opened in 2009, the Modern Wing has a few places you can spend an hour for free. Take the Nichols Bridgeway from Millennium Park to the Bluhm Family Terrace, then enjoy the views of the park, the skyline and the contemporary sculptures on the terrace (312/443-3600; artinstituteofchicago.org).</p>	<p>If you go inside, <i>Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century</i> runs July 25–October 3 and showcases 300 of the photojournalist's images.</p>	<p>Plan to go on Thursdays when museum admission is free after 5 p.m. and Terzo Piano serves modern Italian with views of Millennium Park.</p>
	<p>AeroBalloon at Navy Pier Soar 35 stories above Lake Michigan in the new AeroBalloon at Navy Pier. The anchored helium-filled balloon carries 18 passengers ages 5 and older. The 60-foot-wide white balloon resembles Victorian Era inflatables. Admission charged (312/224-8827; navypier.com).</p>	<p>This weather-dependent attraction based in South Gateway Park soars 350 feet on 8- to 10-minute rides through late September.</p>	<p>For \$35, buy "speed line" tickets that cut waiting times; regular adult admission is \$25. Call ahead if weather looks iffy (646/827-6287).</p>
	<p>Garfield Park Conservatory Its West Side neighborhood looks a little sketchy, but one of the world's largest indoor gardens awaits here. Though more than a century old, it remains one of Chicago's best-kept secrets. Free; off-street parking is available, too (312/746-5100; garfield-conservatory.org).</p>	<p>Beneath 2 acres of glass, you'll find towering palms, Dale Chihuly glass lilies and 1,850 tropical plants that tell the <i>Sugar from the Sun</i> story.</p>	<p>Check the website before you go for special events such as fashion shows, microbrew tastings and giveaways like free tulip bulbs.</p>
	<p>Promontory Point Jutting into Lake Michigan, Promontory Point is a 12-acre oasis of peace and quiet in Hyde Park, which is home to the University of Chicago (left) and the Obama family. A path winds around the 1930s photogenic field house built of Wisconsin Lannon stone. Free (chicagoparkdistrict.com).</p>	<p>At this 70-year-old park, you'll take in views of sailboats, the city skyline, waves crashing on the seawall and bicyclists on the lakefront path.</p>	<p>To get there, take the 55th Street underpass 6 miles south of the Loop and head east of Lake Shore Drive. Parking is free.</p>
	<p>Museum of Science and Industry You'd need more than a day to cover the massive museum, but in one hour, you'll get a quick hit of education and entertainment at the new <i>Science Storms</i>. The exhibit explores the how and why behind natural phenomena. Admission charged (773/684-1414; msichicago.org).</p>	<p>Fifty interactive stations offer hands-on chances to control a 40-foot tornado, create a tsunami in a 30-foot wave tank and more.</p>	<p>The museum offers 52 free days each year; free days in 2010 include August 30, September 7–14, 20, 21, 27 and 28, and October 4–6. ■</p>